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## THE HERRING-FISHERY AND FISHERMEN.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

THE herring-fishery has been prosecuted more or less by the inhabitants of this country for several hundred years, and the industry has been long recognised not only as an important factor in the food-supply of the country, but as one of the most valuable export trades in Scotland. The catching of herrings received a good deal of attention from the fishing population last century; but as the prosecution of the fishing was marked by great irregularities, the fishermen became disheartened at the repeated failures in the catch, and being unacquainted with any proper mode of curing and salting herrings that would have enabled them to take advantage of prolific seasons, the industry began to languish and decay. The government, however, incited by the success of enterprising Dutchmen engaged in the fishery, saw the prospects of developing, under enlightened auspices and unmeasured energy, a vast sphere of operations; and with the view of encouraging both fishermen and fishcurers to engage in the industry, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1750, and another in 1753, offering substantial bounties to all boats employed in the herring-fishery; which was followed up in 1809 by payment of a bounty of two shillings for every barrel of herrings cured, accompanied by an allowance of two and eightpence per barrel exported. From 1815 to 1826 the export rate was deleted; but the bounty per barrel cured was in the last-mentioned year raised to four shillings; while in the four succeeding years, a yearly reduction of one shilling took place; and in 1830, when the trade was fairly established, the government bounties were abolished.

The fostering care bestowed upon the herring-trade was fruitful of great results; and our countrymen, who had looked upon the Dutch fishery, with all its technicalities, as quite unapproachable, were gratified to find that the Scotch herring-industry was destined to take first rank

both in extent and excellence of cure. What was still more satisfactory to those who had seen it in its struggling days, instead of requiring a continuance of state aid, it was soon able to repay all advances made from the revenue arising from fees paid by fishcurers for receiving the government brand certifying the contents and quality of the barrels, the annual income of which now averages nearly eight thousand pounds.

The regular prosecution of the fishing on the north and north-east coasts may be said not to have commenced till 1815; but from that date, it has been looked upon as a staple industry; and its success or failure has influenced to an enormous extent the comfort or poverty of the communities inhabiting the smaller towns scattered along the eastern shores of Scotland. In the early part of this century, the quantity of fish salted presented a very sober account; and in 1810, the grand total cured in Scotland, England, and the Isle of Man was only 90,185 barrels; while in 1851, the total for Scotland and the Isle of Man was 594,031 barrels. From 1851 till 1870, a period of inactivity prevailed, and the official statistics year after year were abundant proof that the spirit of enterprise was sadly deficient, or that the notoriously capricious herrings had betaken themselves to other waters. Whether the deficiency in the catch was attributable to lack of energy on the part of curers and fishermen, or a long-continued scarcity of fish, is a problem yet unsolved; but it remains on record that the total quantity cured in 1851 was 594,031 barrels; while in 1869 it had only increased to 675,143 barrels. In 1870, Scotland alone produced 833,160 barrels; while in the season of 1884, the total quantity cured reached the enormous figures of 1,697,000 barrels!

It will thus be seen that this great fishing, which is now the mainstay of a vast population extending round the shores of Scotland, has gone on progressing till it has reached a position entitling it to rank among the greatest industries of the country. The money value of the fishing presents a fairly intelligent view of the progress

made during the last fifty years in its prosecution; and the figures given confirm the inexhaustible riches of the sea, and prove the boundless deep to be a mine of wealth, only now beginning to receive the attention which it deserves. The value of the fishing in 1810 was about seventy thousand pounds; and though it was subject to reverses now and again, it gradually gained in dimensions until 1851, when its value was half a million sterling! In 1870, the catch yielded about nine hundred and sixteen thousand five hundred pounds; whereas in 1884 the total quantity cured represented a sum of two million one hundred and twenty-one thousand three hundred and forty-six pounds; which is equal to the rentals of the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Nairn, Inverness, Cromarty, Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness—or the annual value of nearly a half of that of the total area of Scotland.

Along with other improvements, the increase in the number and size of the herring-boats forms an interesting feature in the trade, and is a striking proof of the immense resources at the command of the fishermen. Not only has the numerical strength of the fleet increased greatly, but the size and style of the boats have also changed immensely; and the craft measuring thirty-five feet of keel and fourteen feet of beam, used in 1830-50, have given place to handsome and substantially built vessels, averaging fifty-six feet from stem to stern, and not under eighteen and a half feet of beam, whose burden runs from twenty-five to forty registered tons. Although the demand for herrings has gone on increasing steadily, the tastes of former large consumers have shown remarkable changes, and those—especially the inhabitants of Ireland—who in the early days of the fishing were the best customers of the Scotch curers, now but very moderately recognise salt herrings as an article of food. In 1821, the exportation of salted herrings to Ireland was 125,445 barrels; to the continent, 89,524; and to places out of Europe, 79,836: whereas in 1851 the figures were, Ireland, 66,138; continent, 198,403; places out of Europe, 2367: and in 1884, Ireland, 34,000; continent, 1,149,000; places out of Europe, 960 barrels. The radical changes in the quantities of fish consumed at the different markets in the course of half a century are rather striking; but Ireland has, it is said, largely substituted bacon and other cheap food for the once much-prized fish; while the almost complete collapse of the colonial trade is directly caused by the emancipation of the West Indian slaves, who were provided by their masters with salted herrings as the leading article of fare, and who, in order to efface all recollections of their former degradation, studiously avoided touching the herring after their liberty was secured!

Although not the rule, a number of fishermen often commence fishing for herrings at various ports on the east coast early in July; but it is generally not until about the 20th of the month that the fishermen's regular engagements commence and operations are begun in earnest. At that date the fishcurers are bound to receive the fish at twenty shillings per cran—one cran being equal to a capacity of thirty-seven gallons, and reckoned to contain about eight hundred herrings—from early morning till twelve o'clock mid-

night; and should the weather prove favourable and the shoals abundant, a single crew of energetic men have often earned no less than one hundred pounds in the first week of the fishing, and continued the work with such success, that at the end of the season of eight weeks, a sum of five hundred pounds stood at their credit in the fishcurer's books. In recent years, the boats have largely increased at the leading ports of Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Aberdeen, and Wick, where the numbers employed during the season vary from seven or eight hundred at Fraserburgh, down to four hundred at Aberdeen—not to mention the enormous recent increase at Shetland—each boat being manned by six men and one boy. The extent of netting in use has also largely increased.

For a considerable period of the season the boats prosecute the fishing on the banks from forty to sixty miles away, gradually nearing the shore as the season advances; but in no season imitating the modest efforts of the fishermen of forty or fifty years ago, who never ventured more than ten or fifteen miles off, with the result that the fish, undisturbed in their inward course, were caught in large quantities quite close to the shore. With regard to those days, many of the old people now living on the Aberdeenshire coast have a vivid recollection of the extraordinary excitement that existed in the fishing-towns one or two generations ago when the word passed round that 'a body' of herrings had at length appeared in the bay, the indications of which were a dense flock of seagulls to be seen preying upon the finny tribe, or a large shoal of whales pursuing the fish—the manoeuvres of the former attracting the fishermen to their mark, and afforded an interesting sight to those on the shore.

At this stage of its history, one of the most serious drawbacks to the prosperity of the herring-fishery was the immense shoals of dogfish which regularly visited the north-east coast during the months of July and August, to the almost complete prostration of the fishermen's efforts; for not only did those rapacious fishes greatly destroy the nets in their pursuit of food, but the herrings, which seemed to have a wholesome dread of this enemy, immediately disappeared from their usual haunts whenever the dogfish arrived upon the ground. It was no uncommon thing to see boat-loads of dogfish brought in daily by the fishermen, from whom they were purchased by farmers and crofters for manuring the land, and also for the purpose of providing oil for domestic uses; as, before paraffine or candles had come within the reach of all, a great portion of the lamp-oil used by the poorer classes, on the Aberdeenshire coast at least, was extracted from dogfish. After having visited the coast bound by the German Ocean more or less regularly for sixty or seventy years, the dogfish mysteriously disappeared in 1866; and though they are still met with at intervals by fishermen at the west coast herring-fishing (Lewis and Barra) and at Shetland, they have never again returned to the east coast; a freak of nature which has puzzled the most intelligent fishcurer or fisherman to explain, but which has wielded an influence for good scarcely conceivable, since the disappearance of these pests from the adjacent seas marked the setting in of a tide of prosperity

in the trade which has never again receded. The greatly increased size and number of boats, and the competition for herrings existing in the trade, have rendered inshore fishing next to impossible; and as it is generally the case that herrings are now more abundant at sea than near the land, the anxiety to secure good takes is year by year drawing the fishermen to more distant grounds; hence, there are reasonable prospects that ere many years have elapsed, the prosecution of the fishing will have developed into the regular employment of large smacks and steam-craft able to venture great distances to sea, and, if need be, remain there till a sufficient catch has been obtained.

Having given a short sketch of the rise and progress of the Scotch herring business, some notes on the social aspect of the industry, and a general description of the present mode of catching and curing the fish, will probably prove interesting to those who have not been privileged to visit any of the great fishing-towns during the months of July and August, a time of each year when the mighty herring constitutes the sole topic of conversation.

At the harbours of the herring-towns in the end of June and beginning of July, boats are arriving from north, south, and west laden with all kinds of household goods; and uppermost are the fisher-folk's beds and blankets, upon which are lying the wives and children, who have been taken by this route to save the expense of a trip by rail, but whose condition, from the effects of stormy seas, often demonstrates the folly of the fishermen's financial policy. In addition to the fishermen and their belongings, every train brings hundreds of Highlanders from Inverness, Sutherland, Ross, and the Isles in search of employment on board the boats; and they, in conjunction with the influx of crofters (to be engaged for carting purposes), tramps, itinerant dealers, preaching representatives of various denominations, &c., soon swell the normal population by many thousands, and form as motley a crowd as can be well imagined. The fishing-towns of Aberdeenshire and more northern ports awaken, after a protracted period of somnolence, to the fact that the season of activity has arrived; and the streets which formerly looked bare and deserted, now teem with men, women, and children, all drawn together to share in the spoils of the deep. Order in such a miscellaneous population is sometimes not easily maintained, and the surging and unruly masses which on a Saturday night congregate about the leading thoroughfares tax the energies of the police to the uttermost; and if the Highlanders be on the 'war-path' from the effects of too liberal potations of their own 'mountain dew,' the question of local government has to be settled by military force—an instance of which took place at Fraserburgh in 1874, when fully a thousand Highlanders in an infuriated condition wrecked the police station, bombarded the town-house, and threatened to burn the town, and were only brought to their senses by the arrival of a detachment of soldiers from Aberdeen.

The evening of the seventh day of the week is invariably one of confusion, noise, and fight in every large fishing-town; but throughout the

other nights, all frivolities are cast aside, and the single aim of the whole community is to secure as rich a harvest of herrings as possible. Under ordinary circumstances, the sight afforded by the departure from the harbour of so many craft crawling lazily along in twos, threes, and half-dozens, is very pretty; but when the prospects of a good fishing are exercising the fishermen's minds, and every one is anxious to reach the fishing-ground early, the excitement and competition among the fishermen to secure a good start, transforms the harbour channel into a scene of the wildest confusion, where the fishermen shout, threaten, and at times deal blows at each other, playing tragedy and comedy in turns, to the intense delight of those watching their movements from the piers. Should the weather be favourable, the boats keep constantly streaming from the harbour-mouth; and if a fresh breeze prevails, a very short time will suffice to fill the bay with hundreds of the handy little craft, gaily ploughing their eastward course to the fishing-ground. By-and-by the horizon for a considerable stretch will be dotted with their brown sails, still holding onwards; and only when the sea and clouds join hands, do they finally disappear in the wide waste of waters.

On leaving the harbour and getting the sails set and trimmed, the crew of the craft betake themselves to comfortable quarters among the nets and spare sails lying about the deck, where local yarns are told, and the Highlanders sing Gaelic songs, or rehearse the leading incidents of their life in the Western Isles since last 'she' was in the east coast; but as the fishing-ground is neared, the stories cease, and every one, from the skipper down to the 'scummer' boy—the lad who is employed with a small hand-net to pick any herrings out of the water that happen to fall from the nets—eagerly scans the water in hopes of descriing indications of fish. Should the wished-for appearances be discovered, so much the better; but it often happens that no certain proofs of the existence of fish are obtained, and after reaching a distance where fish are supposed to abound, the sails are lowered, and the men commence to cast the nets into the sea in the dusk of the evening. In doing this, a small portion of the sail is hoisted, and while the craft moves slowly through the water, the fishermen continue casting their nets overboard, until their fleet of say, fifty, nets, attached to one another, and extending in a direct line for a length of two thousand yards, are shot, the whole hanging perpendicularly in the water, and suspended from a rope, to which is fastened skin or metallic buoys floating on the surface of the water. When the whole of the nets belonging to the boats engaged at a large station are set, the sea for a stretch of many miles is one complete network, from which the herrings can scarcely escape; and the work falling upon the fishermen nightly in shooting and hauling their nets may be guessed from the fact that the netting used by the Scotch fishermen, if stretched in a direct line, would extend ten thousand miles, or something like three times across the Atlantic.

Having got the nets safely into the deep, the mast is lowered, the light hoisted, and everything put into its proper place for the

night; and as the craft drifts slowly along with the wind or tide, surrounded by hundreds of other fishing-boats, not a sound is heard save the occasional whistle of a steamer slowly threading its way through the floating hamlet, or the shrill cry of the expectant seabirds. On board the boats, the crews have retired to rest, with the exception of one or two left to act as the watch, but who, when their conversation runs dry, invariably seek change in the arms of Morpheus, and trust to providence to fulfil the duties which they had undertaken. Once or twice during the night the skipper causes a net or two to be pulled up; and if the prospects of a successful fishing are good, the position occupied is retained; but if no herrings are in the nets, it is not uncommon for the crew to remove to another spot, in hopes of meeting in with better luck, where the labour of shooting the nets has again to be undergone.

As the morning breaks, the crews bestir themselves, and at an early hour the work of hauling commences, which being accomplished sooner or later, according to the weight of fish secured, all canvas is set upon the craft; and as she speeds steadily through the sea, causing the wavelets rippling at the bow to sparkle brilliantly in the morning sun, the crew, all unconscious of the glorious panorama spread before them, actively engage in shaking the herrings out of the nets and otherwise preparing for discharging their catch on reaching the harbour. As the net hangs like a curtain in the water, herring in their progress get their heads into the meshes, whence they cannot retreat, and are thus held captive till the nets are hauled on board and the fish shaken into the hold. On many occasions the herrings strike so densely that almost a whole complement of nets sink to the bottom, which often entails a loss upon a single crew of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds; while at other times the craft are so deeply laden with the precious freight, that they run the harbour for a distance of perhaps forty miles, with the water occasionally playing upon their decks, and only saved from foundering by the extreme calmness of the weather. In many seasons, the fishing proves a complete blank for a protracted period; and as the whole community in the fishing-towns is entirely dependent upon the success of the industry, such occasions throw the spirits of everybody below zero, and the usual bustle and smiling faces give place to solemn countenances; and curers, coopers, and others stand in groups on the piers and at the street corners discussing the fishermen's chances and prophesying the result of next week's fishing.

## IN ALL SHADES.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

No human eye ever again beheld Wilberforce Whitaker, alive or dead. The torrent that had washed down the gap in the narrow horsepath tore away with it in the course of that evening's rain a great mass of tottering earth that had long trembled on the edge of the precipice; and when next day the governor's servants went down in awed silence to hunt among the débris

for the mangled body, they found nothing but a soaked hat on the road behind, and a broken riding-whip close to the huge rent that yawned across the path by the crumbling ledge of newly fallen clay. Louis Delgado alone could tell of what had happened; and in Louis Delgado's opinion, Dr Whitaker's crushed and shapeless body must be lying below under ten thousand tons of landslip rubbish. 'I see de gentleman haltin' on de brink ob de hole,' he said a hundred times over to his gossips next day, 'and I tink I hear him call aloud someting as him go ober de tip ob de big precipice. But it doan't sound to me ezactly as if him scared and shoutin'; 'pears more as if him singing to hisself a kind ob mounful miserable psalm-tune.'

In tropical countries, people are accustomed to hurricanes and thunderstorms and landslips and sudden death in every form—does not the Church service even contain that weirdly suggestive additional clause among the petitions of the litany, 'From earthquake, tempest, and violent commotion, good Lord, deliver us?'—and so nobody ever tried to dig up Wilberforce Whitaker's buried body; and if they had tried, they would never have succeeded in the attempt, for a thousand tons of broken fragments lay on top of it, and crushed it to atoms beneath them. Poor old Bobby felt the loss acutely, after his childish fashion, for nearly a fortnight, and then straightway proceeded to make love as usual to Miss Seraphina and the other ladies, and soon forgot his whole trouble in that one congenial lifelong occupation.

Nora Dupuy did not so quickly recover the shock that the mulatto's sudden and almost supernatural death had given her system. It was many weeks before she began to feel like herself again, or to trust herself in a room alone for more than a very few minutes together. Born West Indian as she was, and therefore superstitious, she almost feared that Dr Whitaker's ghost would come to plead his cause with her once more, as he himself had pleaded with her that last unhappy evening on the Italian terrace. It wasn't her fault, to be sure, that she had been the unwitting cause of his death; and yet in her own heart she felt to herself almost as if she had deliberately and intentionally killed him. That insuperable barrier of race that had stood so effectually in his way while he was still alive was partly removed now that she could no longer see him in person; and more than once, Nora found herself in her own room with tears standing in both her eyes for the poor mulatto she could never possibly or conceivably have married.

As for Tom Dupuy, he couldn't understand such delicate shades and undertones of feeling as those which came so naturally to Nora; and he had therefore a short and easy explanation of his own for his lively little cousin's altered demeanour. 'Nora was in love with that infernal nigger fellow,' he said confidently over and over again to his uncle Theodore. 'You take my word for it, she was head over ears in love with him; that's about the size of it. And that evening when she behaved so disgracefully with him on the terrace at the governor's, he proposed to her, and she accepted him, as sure as gospel.



If I hadn't threatened him with a good sound horsewhipping, and driven him away from the house in a deuce of a funk, so that he went off with his tail between his legs, and broke his neck over a precipice in that terrible thunder-storm—you mark my words, Uncle Theodore—she'd have gone off, as I always said she would, and she'd have ended by marrying a woolly-headed brown man.'

Mr Theodore Dupuy, for his part, considered that even to mention the bare possibility of such a disgrace within the bosom of the family was an insult to the pure blood of the Dupuys that his nephew Tom ought to have been the last man on earth to dream of perpetrating.

Time rolled on, however, month after month, and gradually Nora began to recover something of her natural gaiety. Even deep impressions last a comparatively short time with bright young girls; and before six months more had fairly rolled by, Nora was again the same gay, light, merry, dancing little thing that she had always been, in England or in Trinidad.

One morning, about twelve months after Nora's first arrival in the island, the English mail brought a letter for her father, which he read with evident satisfaction, and then handed it contentedly to Nora across the breakfast-table. Nora recognised the crest and monogram in a moment with a faint flutter: she had seen them once before, a year ago, in England. They were Harry Noel's. But the postmark was Barbadoes. She read the letter eagerly and hastily.

'DEAR SIR'—it ran—'I have had the pleasure already of meeting some members of your family on the other side of the Atlantic'—that was an overstatement, Nora thought to herself quietly; the plural for the singular—'and as I have come out to look after some property of my father's here in Barbadoes, I propose to run across to Trinidad also, by the next steamer, and gain a little further insight into the habits and manners of the West Indies. My intention is to stop during my stay with my friend Mr Hawthorn, who—as you doubtless know—holds a district judgeship or something of the sort somewhere in Trinidad. But I think it best at the same time to inclose a letter of introduction to yourself from General Sir Henry Labouillière, whom I daresay you remember as formerly commandant of Port-of-Spain when the Hundred and Fiftieth were in your island. I shall do myself the honour of calling upon you very shortly after my arrival, and am meanwhile, very faithfully yours, HARRY NOEL.'

The letter of introduction which accompanied this very formal note briefly set forth that Sir Walter Noel, Mr Noel's father, was an exceedingly old and intimate friend of the writer's, and that he would feel much obliged if Mr Dupuy would pay young Mr Noel any attentions in his power during his short stay in the island of Trinidad.

It would be absurd to deny that Nora felt flattered. She blushed, and blushed, and blushed again, with unmistakable pleasure. To be sure, she had refused Harry Noel; and if he were to ask her again, even now, she would refuse him a second time. But no girl on earth is wholly proof in her own heart against resolute

persistence. Even if she doesn't care a pin for a man from the matrimonial point of view, yet provided only he is 'nice' and 'eligible,' she feels naturally flattered by the mere fact that he pays her attention. If the attention is marked and often renewed, the flattery is all the deeper, subtler, and more effective. But here was Harry Noel, pursuant of his threat (or should we rather say his promise?), following her up right across the Atlantic, and coming to lay siege to her heart with due formalities once more, in the very centre of her own stronghold! Yes, Nora was undeniably pleased. Of course, she didn't care for him; oh, dear, no, not the least little bit in the world, really; but still, even if you don't want to accept a lover, you know, it is at anyrate pleasant to have the opportunity of a second time cruelly rejecting him. So Nora blushed, and smiled to herself, and blushed over again, and felt by no means out of humour at Harry Noel's evident persistence.

'Well, Nora?' her father said to her, eyeing her interrogatively. 'What do you think of it?'

'I think, papa, Mr Noel's a very gentlemanly, nice young man, of a very good old English family.'

'Yes, yes, Nora: I know that, of course. I see as much from Sir Henry Labouillière's letter of introduction. But what I mean is, we must have him here, at Orange Grove, naturally, mustn't we? It would never do, you see, to let a member of the English aristocracy'—Mr Dupuy dwelt lovingly upon these latter words with some unction, as preachers dwell with lingering cadence upon the special shibboleths of their own particular sect or persuasion—'go to stop with such people as your coloured friends over yonder at Mulberry, the Hawthorns.'

Nora was silent.

'Why don't you answer me, miss?' Mr Dupuy asked testily, after waiting for a moment in silent expectation.

'Because I will never speak to you about my own friends, papa, when you choose to talk of them in such untrue and undeserved language.'

Mr Dupuy smiled urbanely. He was in a good humour. It flattered him, too, to think that when members of the English aristocracy came out to Trinidad they should naturally select him, Theodore Dupuy, Esquire, of Orange Grove, as the proper person towards whom to look for hospitality. The fame of the fighting Dupuys was probably not unknown to the fashionable world even in London. They were recognised and talked about. So Mr Dupuy merely smiled a bland smile of utter obliviousness, and observed in the air (as men do when they are addressing nobody in particular): 'Coloured people are always coloured people, I suppose, whether they're much or little coloured; just as a dog's always a dog whether he's a great big heavy St Bernard or a little snarling snapper of a Skye terrier. But anyhow, it's quite clear to me individually that we can't let this young Mr Noel—a person of distinction, Nora, a person of distinction—go and stop at any other house in this island except here at Orange Grove, I assure you, my dear. Tom or I must certainly go

down to meet the steamer, and bring him up here bodily in the buggy, before your friend Mr Hawthorn—about whose personal complexion I prefer to say absolutely nothing, for good or for evil—has time to fasten on him and drag him away by main force to his own dwelling-place.' (Mr Dupuy avoided calling Mulberry Lodge a house on principle; for in the West Indies, it is an understood fact that only white people live in houses.)

'But, papa,' Nora cried, 'you really mustn't. I don't think you ought to bring him up here. Wouldn't it—well, you know, wouldn't it look just a little pointed, considering there's nobody else at all living in the house except you and me, you know, papa?'

'My dear,' Mr Dupuy said, not unkindly, 'a member of the English aristocracy, when he comes to Trinidad, ought to be received in the house of one of the recognised gentry of the island, and not in that—well, not in the dwelling-place of any person not belonging to the aristocracy of Trinidad. *Noblesse oblige*, Nora; *noblesse oblige*, remember. Besides, when you consider the relation in which you already stand to your cousin Tom, my dear—why, an engaged young lady, of course, an engaged young lady occupies nearly the same position in that respect as if she were already actually married.'

'But I'm not engaged, papa,' Nora answered earnestly. 'And I never will be to Tom Dupuy, if I die unmarried, either.'

'That, my dear,' Mr Dupuy responded blandly, looking at her with parental fondness, 'is a question on which I venture to think myself far better qualified to form an opinion than a mere girl of barely twenty. Tom and I have arranged between us, as I have often already pointed out to you, that the family estates ought on all accounts to be reunited in your persons. As soon as you are twenty-two, my dear, we propose that you should marry. Meanwhile, it can only arouse unseemly differences within the family to discuss the details of the question prematurely. I have made up my mind, and will not go back upon it. A Dupuy never does. As to this young Mr Noel who's coming from Barbadoes, I shall go down myself to the next steamer, and look out to offer him our hospitality immediately on his arrival, before any coloured people—I mention no names—can seize upon the opportunity of intercepting him, and carrying him off forcibly against his will, bag and baggage, to their own dwelling-places.'

#### SOME RUSTIC NAMES OF FLOWERS.

Who does not love the country names of old-fashioned flowers better than those by which botanists and florists call them? By old-fashioned flowers—if forms perennially renewed can ever be called old-fashioned—are meant the flowers our oldest poets praise, and whose simple charms find a place in the songs of modern ones—flowers, the roots of which the old Flemings and the proscribed of Nantes brought with them in their enforced migration to this country, and which, like the industries they introduced, flourished into brighter bloom and strength than in the Fatherland. Some of the rustic names of these old flowers have a quaint prettiness and

meaning in them, like the pet names of little children, which are at once piquant and endearing; and as some are local, others little known, and others, again, nearly obsolete, and likely to be wholly so in another generation or two, one is interested in endeavouring to preserve them.

The 'Falfalaries' (checkered snake's head) of old Shropshire people are properly spoken of by their children's children as 'Fritillaries';\* and bright-looking bluishful 'Pretty Betty,' indigenous to the Kentish chalk, and familiar to many persons by this name, is now, thanks to botany and Board Schools, correctly known as 'Red Valerian.' We, however, who have known it from childhood by its homelier name, will know it by no other; for us, it will always be 'Pretty Betty,' and suggestive of the high bloom on the hypothetical maiden's cheek in honour of whom it was so named. In Chaucer's time, it was crudely called 'Setwale,' or 'Set-a-wall,' from its well-known habit of cresting old castles and other crumbling walls, and of growing above gray posterns and old garden-gates, whence, from the tender 'Good-nights' not unusual at such places, it probably got its Shropshire name of 'Kiss-at-the-wicket,' and its Surrey synonym, 'Kiss-behind-the-garden-gate.' The variegated 'Ribbon-grass' of our gardens, anciently called—but that was when the rood of Boxley flourished, and village maidens, knowing no other literature, read their saints' calendar in flowers—'Our Lady's Laces' had become, when Parkinson wrote, 'Painted' or 'Ladies' Laces,' which makes all the difference. In many places it has the common name of 'Gardener's Garters'; but in a corner of Kent not far from the Weald, where many old-world ways and words are cherished, it has the pretty, pert, but apposite one of 'Match-me-if-you-can'—a name that prompted the examination of a dozen blades of it, only to discover that, by some exquisite diversity of arrangement of the creamy white and pale-green stripes, not one of the delicately striated leaves exactly resembled another.

'I won't have it called "London-pride,"' said the eighty-year-old proprietress of a garden, once fuller of bloom and colour and sweetness than any other we have known; but that was before sight failed its owner. 'What have we country-folk and simple flowers to do with "London-pride?" For my part, I like it best by its old Kentish name of "None-so-pretty." If any doubt the fitness of the sobriquet, let them take the trouble to microscopically examine the minute painted and jewelled corolla of this flower, and assure themselves how truly it deserves the appellation.

No country garden is without 'Honesty,' or 'White Satin-flower' as it is sometimes called, from the silvery lustre of its large circularly shaped *saliques*, which, when dried, were used to dress up fireplaces in summer, and decorate the chimney-mantels of cottages and village inns. Our aged friend had another name for this plant also, and called it 'Money-in-both-pockets.' The curious seed-vessels, which grow in pairs, and are

\* Near Weston, one of the seats of the Earl of Bradford, in Shropshire, there is a field locally called the 'Falfalarie Field,' which people annually visit for the sake of the fritillary, which abounds there, as it does in Christ Church Meadows, Oxford.

semi-transparent, show the flat disc-shaped seeds like little coins within them, an appearance which no doubt originated the name.

Reminiscent of the times to which we just now alluded, when holy names hung about the hedge-rows, and the blossoming of plants recalled sacred seasons and events, the lilac in Devonshire bears the name of 'Whitsuntide Flower;' the country-people know it by no other. There *Cardamine pratensis*, Shakspeare's 'Lady-smocks,' the 'Cuckoo-flower' of old Gerarde, whose blossoms border the streams and rivulets in spring 'all silver-white,' like lengths of bleaching linen, is known as 'Milkmaids;' and in the same county the 'Fox-glove' becomes 'Folk's-glove' or 'Fairy-glove;' while in Ireland, children call the drooping tubular freckled bells 'Fairy thimbles,' and are careful not to meddle with them after sunset, on pain of being pinched by the 'good-people.'

The milk-white 'Candytuft' (*Iberis amara*) grows plentifully on stony upland fields in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Once, in the latter county, when we were gathering some of it from a field in which some women were weeding, one of them remarked to another that she should not have liked to have done so when she was a young woman; upon which we inquired its name, and was told, almost reluctantly, 'Poverty'—a most expressive name; for it loves best a poor and arid soil, and has its botanical name from its intense bitterness. Evidently, village lads and lasses had from early times an unwritten language of flowers, and this was one of its phrases.

As our readers know, 'Pansy' is a very old name for the 'Heart's-ease,' as old at least as Queen Elizabeth's time, and probably older. Spenser writes of the 'pretty pauncy;' and Ophelia gives it 'for thought.' It is a plant of many names. Shakspeare twice calls it 'Love-in-idleness.' Poor, simple, pious folk, seeing its three lower petals rayed like a 'glory,' called it 'Herb of the Trinity.' The vagrant habit of the plant procured it the name of 'Kit-run-the-streets,' which appellation it has not wholly lost in country-places. Rustics also call it 'Two-faces-under-a-hood.' But it was as 'Heart's-ease' we first knew it, a name that gives sweet force to that other old-world one, 'Call-me-to-you,' which without it had been meaningless.

Of local names for flowers, one of the prettiest we know is that by which a Dorsetshire girl designated the 'Michaelmas Daisy'—a name full of unconscious poetry; she called it 'Summer's Farewell.' 'We shall not have many more nose-gays this year, ma'am; I see "Summer's Farewell" is blowing;' and upon desiring to see the unknown flower, she pointed out the familiar 'Michaelmas Daisy.'

In Wiltshire, the children give the names of 'Rushlights' and 'Fairy-candles' to the 'Trip-madam' of our ancestors, the small fleshy-leaved erect stems and terminal flowers with spreading anthers of the yellow sedum (or stonecrop), frequent on old walls and houstops; and to the subtle child-fancy, we have no doubt the resemblance is sufficiently strong to set them all alight on summer nights.

The 'Danewort' or Dwarf-elder is in some districts said to be so called because the people fancy it sprung from the blood of the Danes slain in battle; and that if, upon a certain

day of the year, you cut it, it bleeds. It is noteworthy that the large terminal cymes of this plant, which loves waste places, are of a purplish colour, the berries black, and that the juice of the flowering stems, like the fruit, produces a blood-like stain.

The curious corruption of 'Fritillary' to 'Falfalarie,' with which we started, is easily understood; but who would recognise the poetically named 'Narcissus' under the homely guise of 'White Nancies,' the common name for it in Shropshire gardens? We had rather it kept its pretty rustic name of 'daffodil,' a name inwoven in many a garland of old English verse, and sweetly suggestive of woods, and nut-boughs sparkling with buds, and village children, and the fresh young joy of spring. The name daffodil is now generally applied to the species with bright yellow flowers.

Another old-world plant included in these days under the generic name of *Campanula*, and which in many parts was known as 'Country-bells,' keeps in its Kentish name of 'Canterbury-bells' a local legend; and is so called not only from the prevalence of the plant in the neighbourhood of the old sainted city, but because it was the type of 'Becket's bells,' which pilgrims to his shrine carried away with them, in token of their having been there. Another of its tribe, better known than liked, has the quaint name of 'Little-steeple-bell-flower,' a picturesque name one would not willingly blot out from floral nomenclature; though its common one of 'Rampions' is quite good enough for it, and highly characteristic of the exuberant mode in which its fleshy and at the same time fibrous roots take possession of the soil and overrun it. It is a dangerous plant to admit into gardens, where its tall tapering stem, beset with little watchet blue-bells, is occasionally seen.

In the north of England, the wild hyacinth of the south—sometimes erroneously called 'Harebell'—with its pendulous flowers underhanging each other on one side only of its drooping stem, has the curious name of 'Ring-of-bells' from a fancied resemblance (a writer in *Notes and Queries* tells us) to the bells on which King David is sometimes represented playing in old wood-engravings. In Shropshire, the fertile stems of the Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), which shoot up like brown pencils out of the soil before the sterile ones appear, are called 'Toadpipes' by the children; and a similar name is applied to them in many parts of Scotland. In Shropshire, also, the chalk-white flowers of the rock alyssum have the pretty trivial name of 'Summer Snow;' and the scarlet pimpernel, that trusted hydroscope of hind and shepherd—of which Lord Bacon wrote: 'There is a small flower in the stubble-fields which country-people call "Wincopipe," which if it openeth in the morning, you may be sure of a fine day'—is 'Wincoppep;' which, methinks, to use his lordship's idiom, is the more correct of the two, seeing the habit of the plant is to close its petals when a rain-cloud dulls the sky, and to open them wide in sunshine—alternations suggestive of the name 'Wink-and-peep,' which time has probably contracted. In some places it is known as 'the poor man's weather-glass.'

In the same district, that fine sour relish of

our childhood, 'Sorrel,' is simply 'Sour-dock;' and the early Purple Orchis (*O. mascula*), with its dark-green leaves plashed with brown, and spikes of richly coloured flowers springing up in cowslip-covered meadows, is hailed as 'King's Fingers.'

The cowslip has in Shropshire the common name of 'Paigle,' a name the derivation of which no one appears to understand; but its old Kentish name of 'Culver-keys' is unknown. We have lately seen the meaning of this also queried. It had its origin most probably in the common country fashion of christening flowers, in Gerarde's time, from some fancied resemblance in its drooping umbel of unopened flowers to a 'bunch of keys' hanging from a ring or girdle; just as the pendent clusters of ash-seeds are called—we presume from the same idea—'Ashen-keys;' and as a bunch of keys must belong to some one or some thing, why not to the 'culver,' or wood-pigeon? In this fanciful way we can imagine the pretty rustic name of 'Culver-key' coming about; an hypothesis wholly our own, and therefore open to correction.

It was after this fashion, Parkinson tells us, he named the 'Wild Clematis' (*C. vitalba*), 'Traveller's Joy,' because it loves to spread green bowers in hedgerows near villages and the habitations of men. But whence came the name of 'Roving Sailor?'—one of the trivial ones for the ivy-leaved Toad-flax (*Linaria cymbalaria*), the fine thread-like runners of which hang from old garden-walls—those of Hampton Court, for instance—bearing in their season little solitary blue or purple petaled flowers. No rustic would have so named it; to him, its other appellations of 'Hen-and-chickens,' or 'Mother-of-thousands,' would have been more natural. But 'Roving Sailor' savours of that other element with which the husbandman meddles not, and may have been bestowed by some maritime superannuant, whose imagination transformed the long streaming roots into cordage, and the tiny blue-jacketed flowers into sailors climbing it, while the straggling habit of the plant completed the similitude.

Traditions die hard in country villages, and faith in the specially remedial properties of plants once dedicated to holy names and anniversaries is by no means extinct amongst peasant-folk. Thus, we were gravely informed last summer by a cottager of our acquaintance, in the sweet hamlet of Harbledown, in Kent, that there was nothing for a green wound better than the leaves of our 'Saviour's Flannel' (or 'Blanket'), a startling name for the exquisitely soft, glaucous, green leaves of what some persons secularly call 'Mouse-ear,' and which—to liken nature to art—resemble in texture the finest silken plush, and retain their softness and pliability for months after they are gathered. It is often seen in borders, where its silvery leaves and pale mauve-coloured flowers render it effective.

Again, the great 'White Lily' (*Lilium candidum*), the 'Sceptre Lily' of our time, 'Our Lady's Lily' in the past, of which the old masters made such effective use in their pictures of the Virgin, is in Shropshire still known as 'Ascension Lily,' an evident misnomer. It should be, remembering the time of its blooming, the 'Lily of the Annunciation.' In the neighbourhood of the Wrekin it

has another name—it is the 'Healing Lily;' and the curative virtue of the whole plant is firmly believed in.

It was a pretty custom to name the plants after the saints and holy seasons about whose anniversaries they fell a-flowering. It saved some absurdities and vulgarities in christening them, and left us names so sweet and appropriate, that, like the gillyflowers and sops-in-wine, sweetbrier, &c., of the old poets, they will never become old or inapt. Who would exchange 'Christmas Rose' for 'Black Hellebore,' or 'Lent Lily' for 'Pseudo Narcissus,' or prefer 'Anemone' to 'Easter-flower,' or 'Polygally' to 'Crosswort?' (carried on wands in the ancient perambulations of Rogation-week). 'Whitsuntide Flower' is a prettier name than 'Lilac,' and 'Michaelmas Daisy' than 'Aster Tradescanti,' the one by which it was known when Charles I. was king.

But these are not the purely rustic names of plants with which we started. One more example—a local one—and our personally formed catalogue of them is ended. Any one who has observed the regular height to which the garden fumitory grows when planted against a wall, forming a background of its soft, finely cut, bright-green leaves, which overhang each other, and the seemingly equal distances at which its clusters of yellow or rose coloured flowers depend, will at once perceive the fitness of its quaint Shropshire name of 'Ladies' Needlework Flower.' It has the richness, with some of the formality, of a flounce of old chenille embroidery, such as in other years exercised the industry and ingenuity of English ladies. This plant is said to be called fumitory (earth-smoke, *fume terre*) from the belief that it was produced without seed from vapours arising from the earth. This was an ancient and well-rooted belief as far back as 1485. In Kent it is called 'waxdolls,' from the doll-like appearance of its little flowers.

### SPIRITED AWAY.

#### IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. III.

FIVE minutes later, when my eyes were unbandaged, I found myself being driven along a road which was apparently in the extreme suburbs of London, the houses that we passed were so scattered and far apart. Legros was by my side, and two other men were sitting opposite us; but the windows of the conveyance were drawn up, and although the night was now perfectly clear, only the vaguest outlines were discernible of anything outside, except for a moment now and again when we came within the faint circle of light radiated from an occasional street-lamp. Suddenly my heart gave a great throb, for by the momentary gleam of a lamp I saw that the conveyance in which I was travelling was a mourning-coach—a coach draped in black, and such as is never made use of except for following the dead. Could it be possible that the hearse with its dread burden was in front of us, and that we were following it to some bourn to me unknown? I sank back into my corner, and asked myself whether it was really true that I, who had left my far-off country home scarcely twenty-four hours ago, could thus suddenly, and



without any action of my own, have become a participant in some dire tragedy, of which as yet I knew neither the beginning nor the end. I was but a boy, just recovering from a long illness, and if a few tears welled from my eyes in the darkness, it is perhaps hardly to be wondered at.

But it was of Karavich I was thinking more than of myself. There was little doubt left in my mind that the poor *cafetier* had come to some foul and sudden end. But who and what was he, and what was the nature of his crime? Who were these men, who had constituted themselves at once his judges and his executioners, and to what place was the body of the murdered man being conveyed so mysteriously in the dead of night? Vain questions one and all. A sense sat heavily upon me of being in the power of an inexorable Destiny, who was leading me onward whether I willed it or no, by paths to me unknown, towards a goal I was unable to foresee.

Soon the last lamp was left behind, and we plunged forward into the blacker darkness of the country; and now our pace was increased, the horses breaking into a long swinging trot, which gradually became wearisome from its absolute monotony. As on our first journey, not a word was spoken by any one. By-and-by, from sheer fatigue I suppose, perhaps aided in part by the liqueur given me by Legros, I fell into a sort of troubled sleep, in which the real and the imaginary were strangely blended. How long this state of semi-consciousness lasted, and how many miles we travelled during the time, I had no means of judging. The abrupt stoppage of the coach, and the cessation of the monotonous grinding of the wheels, brought me back with a start to the realities of my position. Legros let down one of the windows. Day was just breaking. A dim misty light pervaded the atmosphere, through which as yet nothing was clearly visible. M. Legros and one of the others alighted and went forward, leaving me and the other man inside.

'Are we near the end of our journey?' I said to the silent figure sitting opposite me.

He started, stared at me for a moment, and then made some unintelligible reply. Presently the coach moved forward a little way, and then halted again. Then M. Legros came up, and standing on the carriage step, spoke to me through the window.

'Another stage of our journey is at an end,' he said. 'We have one more stage to travel together before we separate. You will now please to alight; but before doing this, I must ask you to give me your promise that neither by word nor gesture will you endeavour to attract the attention or rouse the suspicions of any strangers, not of our party, whom you may presently see. As I have already told you, you have only to obey my instructions implicitly, and no harm shall befall you.—Have I your word, monsieur?' There was a stern questioning look in his eyes as he finished speaking.

'I am helpless, and in your power; I can only do as you wish.'

'It is well,' he said as he stepped down and opened the carriage door.

I was glad enough to get out and be able to stretch my cramped limbs. The other man followed, and during the next few minutes he and

M. Legros kept close to me, one walking on either side of me.

My first glance round showed me that we had alighted some twenty or thirty yards from a broad, sluggish-flowing river, which I at once said to myself could be none other than the Thames. A thin white mist lay on the water, through which only the faintest outlines of the opposite shore were discernible. In mid-stream, a small steamer lay moored, from the funnel of which a thin black pennon of smoke was lazily trailing. We had alighted at a kind of wharf, roughly paved and shut in by some half-dilapidated buildings, which looked unspeakably forlorn and desolate in the light of early morning. Some half-score men, dressed in guernseys and high boots, were lounging about, their hands buried deep in their pockets, looking on with a stolidity which it seemed as if nothing could rouse into animation, at the proceedings of the party of which I formed one, which were conducted without the slightest pretence at secrecy. A little way in the background stood the plumeless hearse with its two black horses.

We three men, I in the middle, walked down to the edge of the wharf. The tide was low; and it was not till we were close to the water that I perceived a couple of boats which seemed to be waiting our arrival. The first looked like an ordinary ship's boat; in it were seated some half-dozen men resting on their oars, with a cockswain in the stern. The second boat was a broad old-fashioned tub; but I could not repress a shudder when I saw the coffin which had been brought down in the hearse laid along its bottom. Two men were in this boat, one seated at the head, and the other at the foot, of the coffin.

There was barely time to note all this before, in compliance with a whispered word from Legros, who still kept by my side, I descended four or five slimy tide-washed steps, and stepped into the first boat, followed closely by my companions. As soon as we had seated ourselves, a signal was given; the men dipped their oars, and a moment later the ragged wharf and its staring denizens were left behind. And now it was I first became aware that we had the other boat with its awful freight in tow. It glided after us through the morning mist, as though the secret it held was one from which we might never more escape.

Our boat headed in a straight line from the wharf. I had undergone so many surprises during the last few hours that it was only one more added to the number to find that our destination was the steamer which was anchored out in mid-stream. Five minutes later, I found myself on board, and, at the invitation of Legros, I at once followed him below. He conducted me into a handsomely fitted up saloon, and then left me. It could not have been more than a few minutes after this when the engine gave its first palpitating throb, and the third stage of my strange journey had begun.

Whither were we bound? What would be the duration of our voyage? And what possible object could my captors have in taking me so far away from home? These were questions that put themselves to me again and again; and then I thought of the fate of poor Karavich, and my heart as I did so grew faint within me.

It was all an unfathomable mystery, and the more I strove to find some ray of light to guide me through its mazes, the more bewildered I became. In order to relieve in some measure the burden of my thoughts, I began to peer through the port-holes of the cabin, one after another; but there was little to be seen to gratify my curiosity. A dim line of desolate flats on the one hand; on the other, an equally dreary expanse of far-reaching shore, with here and there a few scattered buildings, from some of which sprang huge chimneys, which were already belching forth black volumes of smoke to the morning air. It had begun to rain by this time; but there seemed to be scarcely the faintest breath of wind; the quick soft pulsing of the engines told me that we were now making rapid progress through the water.

I had been about half an hour alone, when I was rejoined by Legros. He was all smiles and amiability. He gave me the impression of a man from whose mind some burden which had pressed heavily on it had been suddenly lifted. There was no longer that strained intense look in his eyes—that air of watchful suspicion which had been so noticeable in him earlier on, had altogether vanished. He was, if possible, more of an enigma to me under this new aspect than he had been before.

'Your eyes have a drowsy look in them, my friend,' he said pleasantly. 'First of all, you must partake of some breakfast; and after that, you shall sleep—sleep—sleep for the next dozen hours, if it so please you. This little *appartement* is set aside for your service so long as you favour us with your company.' As he spoke, he opened one of a row of three or four doors, and disclosed a tiny sleeping berth, fitted up and in every respect ready for occupation, which looked infinitely tempting to my tired eyes. I took advantage of the opportunity to perform some needful ablutions. When I re-entered the saloon, breakfast was on the table. A minute later, Legros and I were joined by two men whom I had not seen before, together with one of the men who had accompanied us inside the carriage. The two strangers were in some kind of undress uniform. Legros smilingly introduced me to them as a young English friend of his who had taken a fancy to accompany them a little way on their voyage. They replied by a few polite words in English, in which they expressed a hope that my voyage would prove a pleasant one; but polite though their words might be, I thought I detected under them a hidden ring of sarcasm. After this, the conversation became general, except as far as I was concerned, it being conducted in the same unknown language as before.

When I sat down at table, I seemed to have no appetite, but it came with the occasion, and despite the doubts and fears which beset me, I made a hearty meal. When the others rose, I retired to my berth, and in less than ten minutes was sound asleep. It was on the point of three o'clock when I awoke. On gazing out through the port-hole, nothing could be seen but a slowly heaving expanse of waters, through which we were quickly cleaving our way. A dreary drizzle of rain was still falling. On entering the

saloon, I found M. Legros lounging on the couch over a novel and a cigarette. 'Ah, ha! you look better, much better,' he said with a nod and a smile. 'I advise you to do as I am doing. It's the only thing on a day like this. Here are cigarettes, and on that shelf you will find some half hundred novels in half-a-dozen languages. You can of course go on deck if you wish to do so and prefer a wet coat to a dry one.' 'Thank you,' I said. 'I will try what it's like on deck—at least for a little while. The fresh air will do me good.'

Of a truth, there was not much to keep any one long on deck. A man at the wheel, an officer on the bridge, and two seamen forward, all in oilskins, were the only living beings visible. After lighting a cigar, I found a sheltered nook under the lee of one of the boats. As far as my defective geographical knowledge allowed me to judge, we were now somewhere about the mouth of the Thames and heading towards the North Sea. On our left, mile after mile of low-lying desolate shore was dimly discernible through the thin drizzle of rain. This I concluded must be some portion of the Essex coast. On our right, the gray heaving waters stretched out into infinitude. Already the dull November afternoon was darkening to its close. From minute to minute, my spirits within me seemed to be sinking deeper and deeper; the gloom and desolation of the great waste of waters seemed but a reflex of the gloom and disquietude of my own thoughts. In a little while I flung away the end of my cigar and went below. M. Legros was no longer there; I had the saloon to myself. It was necessary to pass the time somehow, so, after making choice of a book, I stretched myself on a sofa and made a resolute attempt to read. It was a vain effort. Karavich's melancholy deep-set eyes and white face blotted out the printed words.

After a time, the steward appeared and began his preparations for dinner. He was a sandy-haired, foxy-faced man, with a retreating chin and prominent teeth. I went on, pretending to read, and taking but little or no notice of him; when presently I was startled by a low warning 'Hist!' and on glancing up, I saw that the man was regarding me with a strangely earnest look. When he perceived that he had attracted my attention, he held up a finger, as if in warning, and then said in a whisper, that was a strange jumble of broken English interlarded with French, such as I cannot attempt to reproduce: 'Do not appear to notice me, monsieur, nor speak to me aloud, for the love of heaven!'

I stared at him in astonishment, but so far obeyed his adjuration as to remain silent.

'Monsieur is an Englishman,' he began again presently, but still in a whisper so low that only with difficulty could I make out what he said; 'and his kind heart will not allow him to refuse to do a small service for one who is in great extremity. Is it not so?'

'Before I can promise, I must know what the service is that you want me to do,' I whispered back.

'It is only to post a certain letter after monsieur's arrival in London.'

I could not repress a start. 'But how soon am I likely to be back in London?' I asked with an eagerness I could not conceal.

'If all goes well, in less than twenty-four hours from now.'

Here, indeed, was joyful tidings; but I suppose I must have looked somewhat incredulous, for a moment later the man added: 'Monsieur will find that what I tell him is the truth.'

'In that case, of course, I shall be quite willing to post any letter you may intrust to my care.'

'O monsieur, thanks—a thousand thanks!' replied the man in a tone the sincerity of which I could not doubt. 'If Monsieur Karavich could do so, he would thank monsieur in person, because it is he who is the writer of the letter.'

'Monsieur Karavich!' I exclaimed aloud. 'I thought that'—

The clatter of a dozen knives on the table drowned my voice. The steward had turned as white as a sheet. 'For the love of heaven, monsieur, do not speak above a whisper,' he said after a pause and a frightened look round. 'What I am doing now is at the risk of my life—but that matters little. No; Monsieur Karavich is not dead. To avoid any dangerous questions being asked, he was brought down here as if he were a dead man in a coffin made for the purpose. Oh, but it was cunningly contrived! Of all Monsieur Karavich's friends, no one knew—there was not one to warn him.'

Before I could say anything further, he had left the cabin, but he was back again in the course of two or three minutes. 'Here is the letter, monsieur,' he said, still in a whisper. 'The thanks of ten, of twenty, of fifty thousand brave hearts would be yours, if they knew the service you have promised to do. In less than fifty hours, it will be known in every capital in Europe that Fedor Karavich is a prisoner.'

I took the letter and put it away in an inner pocket of my vest. 'No eyes but mine shall see the letter. I will post it with my own hands as soon as I reach London. But tell me—who and what is Monsieur Karavich?'

'One of the greatest and noblest of men, and a true patriot, if ever there was one. Monsieur Karavich is not his real name; he has twenty different names for different occasions. By birth he belongs to one of the noblest families in his native land; but his heart, his life, his fortune, have been given to the poor and oppressed. His real name is a name of terror wherever tyranny hides and trembles.'

'And what will be his fate, now that his enemies have got him in their clutches?'

'Who can tell? It is not the first time the Bear has had him in its grip. He passed ten years in Siberia when little more than a boy. *Probablement*, he will disappear—vanish utterly, and be heard of never again.'

'Is there no way of helping him? Are there no means of rescuing him?'

The man spread his hands with a gesture eloquent of despair. 'There is no hope—none,' he answered with a half-sob in his voice. There was silence for a few moments, then I noticed his strange face lighten, and coming close to me, he said in a lower whisper than before: 'And

yet, monsieur, who can tell? Fedor Karavich has friends where none would expect to find them—friends secret, but devoted to the cause, even amongst the highest of the high. All that gold can do, all that powerful influence unseen and working in the dark, can do for him will be done; but after all'— He finished with a despondent shake of the head.

'The cause, as you call it, seems to have its emissaries everywhere,' I remarked. 'Even you yourself'— I paused. If an apparition had suddenly stood before the man, he could scarcely have looked more scared. He gave a great gasp, but did not speak.

A moment later, we heard the sound of footsteps. As M. Legros entered by one door, the steward disappeared through another. I became at once immersed in my novel.

The same party sat down to dinner that had met at breakfast. Each of them addressed a few words to me in English, and treated me with the utmost courtesy; but, as before, the chief part of the conversation was kept up in a language of which I knew nothing. When dinner was over, cigarettes and cards were introduced, and I was invited by M. Legros to form one in a rubber of whist. This, however, I declined to do, and went back to my book instead. And so a couple of hours sped quietly away.

At length I said to M. Legros: 'If you have no objection, and these gentlemen will not think it rude on my part, I will retire to my berth.'

'Do so by all means,' he answered. 'But if I were you, I would only partially undress. It is by no means unlikely that you may be called in a hurry.'

About four hours later, I was called in a hurry. A tap came to my door, and the voice of Legros said: 'Are you awake, monsieur? If so, be good enough to dress as quickly as possible.'

Five minutes later I joined him in the saloon.

'I am grieved to say that we are about to lose the pleasure of your company,' he observed in his blandest tones. 'Whatever my regrets may be, I am afraid that I can scarcely expect you to share them; but it is just possible that we may have the felicity of meeting again on some future occasion. In any case, we shall hardly fail to remember each other. Wrap this cloak around you; I trust you will accept it at my hands as a slight souvenir of our acquaintance; and put this flask of cognac in your pocket; you will find the night-air cold on the water.—And now for a few last words of caution.' His brows contracted and his face seemed to darken a little as he went on: 'For your own sake, and if you value your future welfare—nay, what do I say, if you value life itself—you will not speak one word to any living being of that which you have seen and heard during the past few hours. Should we find the authorities in London setting on foot certain inquiries, we shall feel assured that any information they may have acquired can only have emanated from you. In that case— But I feel sure I need not say more, except that I wish you to believe that my warning is intended for your good. And now, *cher monsieur*, if you are ready.'

I followed him on deck like a man in a dream. I had not noticed till now that the screw of the

steamer had ceased to revolve and that we were scarcely moving through the water. The night was bright and starlit. 'Yonder little vessel—what you English, I believe, call a fishing-smack—will be your home for the next hour or two,' said M. Legros, pointing to a dark object some little distance away. 'It will convey you to the nearest port, from which you will readily make your way to London.' He took my hand and held it with a hearty grip. 'And now, adieu, and *bon voyage*. Then in a whisper: 'Remember my warning. In a pocket of the cloak you will find money to defray your expenses to London.'

They were his last words to me. A moment later I was being transferred in a small boat from the steamer to the smack. Even before I got aboard the latter, the steamer was under way again. We could see her lights for a little while after she herself was lost to view, then they, too, were swallowed up in the darkness.

The crew of the smack consisted of three men and a boy. They were a rough but kindly set, and did their best under the circumstances to make me comfortable. I asked them no questions, nor did they ask me any. No doubt, M. Legros had paid them well for the service they had undertaken to perform. Soon after day-break they put me ashore at Lowestoft, and by noon I found myself in London. I at once took a cab and drove off to my friend Gascoigne's lodgings, only stopping for a moment by the way to post poor Karavich's letter. I had an impression, but it may have been groundless, that my movements were watched and followed both at Lowestoft and in London.

I had not been an hour in Gascoigne's company before I had so far disobeyed M. Legros' warning as to have told my friend everything. At my age, it could not well have been otherwise; the burden of such a secret was too heavy for my young shoulders to bear. But I had no desire to share it with any one else: once I had told the story to my friend, I felt that I could hold my tongue for ever.

Three days later, in the dusk of evening, Gascoigne and I strolled down the street to a certain house in which Karavich's note had been addressed. We found the number readily enough. The ground-floor was a baker's shop with an unmistakable English name on the sign—certainly not the name on Karavich's letter. In the window was a card inscribed: 'First and Second Floors to let Unfurnished;' and sure enough, on looking up we saw four uncurtained windows staring blankly into the dark like so many sightless eyes. We made no inquiry at the shop, but hurried away, feeling as if we had touched the verge of another mystery.

One evening, early in the following spring, I was standing gazing into a jeweller's window in Bond Street, when a passing stranger halted, apparently with the view of following my example. I was conscious of his presence, but that was all. I did not even glance at him. Suddenly a voice whispered in my ear: 'Fedor Karavich has escaped; let his enemies beware!' I turned with a start, but only to see a tall dark-clothed figure striding swiftly away.

Before these lines see the light, twelve thousand

miles of ocean will intervene between me and the readers of them. Had it not been so, in all probability the strange experience embodied therein would never have been made public.

## ON PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS IN THE NEW-BORN.

BY A MEMBER OF THE OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

AMONG the grandest of our charitable institutions may be counted those for the care and instruction of the blind. Their utility and the benefit they confer are beyond question, and they are in the highest degree deserving of moral and material support. It is fortunate that human sympathy is seldom slow in extending itself to those, be they young or old, who have lost the priceless boon of vision and who dwell in 'eternal night.' Whilst this is the case, however, and it is a matter for thankfulness, it is well to remember that ours is peculiarly an age when prevention is held to be better than cure, and when considered in connection with cases that admit of 'no cure,' the wisdom of pursuing a course of 'prevention' is only too evident.

It is well known that a large number of the inmates of our blind institutions have been rendered fit objects for admission by preventable causes. The purpose the writer has now before him is the consideration of a class of such preventable cases, but which also embraces the largest proportion. It is peculiarly a subject on which the public need information, and by the acquirement and diffusion of which knowledge, it will be within their power to do an amount of good, and which will tend in some degree to lessen the number blinded in the manner to be now described.

The class of cases to which reference is made are those of young babies, to whom, in consequence of a serious inflammation occurring within a few days after birth, the light of the world may be taken away from them, almost, indeed, before their eyes have opened to it. The disease is principally, but by no means exclusively found among the poorer people; and as it is among them that ignorance mostly prevails, the direst results are most frequently witnessed. The affection—setting-in a few days after birth—is characterised by a discharge of matter from the eyes, and attended with redness and swelling, generally, of the eyelids. Whilst on the one hand it must be strongly urged that such a condition is a serious one, on the other it must be equally recognised that if treated sufficiently early it is amenable to remedies. No mother of a babe should, on noticing the appearances indicated, delay sending for or taking her child to a medical man. The grossest ignorance, however, prevails among mothers and those surrounding them, as to the gravity of this affection, at the time and after the births of their children. The writer in his medical practice experiences few circumstances more sad, and calculated to harrow one's feelings more keenly, than for a baby to be brought for the first medical treatment when the disease has already wrought such havoc as to render a cure an improbability, and too



often an impossibility. Such instances are of frequent occurrence in hospital practice. Dr Emrys-Jones some time ago collected statistics as to the condition of the eyes when brought for treatment at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital; and he found six and a quarter per cent. of the eyes were hopelessly lost, in some cases both eyes, in others one only. There is, moreover, an amazing degree of careless indifference displayed, and when a case in a wretched condition is seen by a medical man for the first time at the end of one, two, or three weeks after the onset of the affection, to the question, 'What have you been doing all this time for the baby's eyes?' will come the reply: 'Why, nothing, sir,' as if a special virtue lay in a negative answer.

The importance of preventing blindness being caused by this disease will be evident, when it is asserted that a third or more of all cases in the blind schools of England have been occasioned by it. Nor, indeed, does this in any manner show its entire effects; for those who have only lost one eye through it, would, of course, be omitted from calculation, as well as those whose vision had been affected in a less degree. On the continent, the proportion would appear to be equally large. In Germany, Reinhard, from investigations at twenty-two German blind asylums, found six hundred and fifty-eight blind from this disease among a total of twenty-one hundred and sixty-five, or thirty and a half per cent. Observations among our own institutions would appear to represent as large or a larger percentage of cases. The writer has kept a record of children admitted into a teaching institution with which he is connected, and the number in his notebook is sixty-two. Of this number he excludes seven, as either not having been examined by him, or the cause of blindness not verified; but of the remaining fifty-five, in no fewer than twenty-one is this affection distinctly traceable as the cause of blindness. This gives a percentage of about thirty-nine. No words, it would appear, can be necessary to add to the telling effect of such figures.

It must be recollected, moreover, that the blind are not only shut off from the pleasures of this world, but their unhappy lot too frequently renders them a necessary burden on their more fortunate sight-possessing fellows. It is desirable that a knowledge of the dreadful results following a neglect of this disease should be impressed upon the community. The results mentioned comparatively seldom occur among the well-to-do, for the reason that the doctor is in immediate attendance, and under skilful treatment the affection is cured; but, however, by extending information on this subject, it will, it is hoped, reach the less fortunately situated. A comprehensive plan for attaining such an object was introduced to the notice of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom, by Dr David McKeown of Manchester. He proposed to utilise the poor-law and birth registration organisations. Such a plan would enable every mother of new-born infants to have read to her, and to be put in possession of, or of whoever may be in attendance, a card specifying the characters and dangers of the disease; and again, as the birth of every child has to be

registered within a certain number of days, another opportunity would be afforded for giving a card with the desired information. The card, it was proposed, should run in this way: '*Instructions regarding new-born infants.*—If the child's eyelids become red and swollen, or begin to run matter within a few days after birth, it is to be taken without a day's delay to a doctor. The disease is very dangerous; and if not at once treated, may destroy the sight of both eyes.'

The Society, on the Report of its Committee on this subject, adopted, with slight modifications, the series of resolutions suggested by Dr McKeown. The first resolution of the Society, and which chiefly concerns us here, was as follows: 'That the purulent ophthalmia of new-born infants being the cause of a vast amount of blindness, mainly because of the ignorance of the public regarding its dangerous character, and the consequent neglect to apply for timely medical aid, it is desirable to instruct those in charge of new-born children by a card' (as previously mentioned). This is to be distributed, the resolution adds, by the poor-law and birth registration organisations of the United Kingdom; and details the methods to be adopted for carrying the plan into operation. In a subsequent resolution, the aid of the medical press is solicited, and the attention of the various institutions which train or employ midwives is drawn to this very important subject.

These resolutions, as it has been said, were adopted by the Ophthalmological Society; and they were desired to be communicated to the Presidents of the Local Government Board, and of similar bodies in Scotland and Ireland. A deputation also was appointed to wait upon the Presidents of these bodies, if necessary, to urge the desirability of the plan sketched out being put into practice; and among other members of this deputation were Sir William Bowman, and the President (Mr Jonathan Hutchinson) of the Society.

It is very much to be hoped that the action of such an influential Society will have a good effect. It clearly puts the gravity of the case before the public; and any individual who can in any way spread the knowledge contained in the foregoing Report will be engaged in a really good cause.

For some time, the Society for the Prevention of Blindness has issued and circulated a leaflet entitled, 'Advice to Mothers who do not wish their Children to be Blind.' It contains sound directions as to the nature of the disease, its recognition, and hints as to what should be done whilst the doctor is being fetched, which should, however, be by no means delayed. Any one interested in the welfare of the blind, and wishing for further information as to the objects of the Society, should communicate with Dr Roth, Secretary, 48 Wimpole Street, London, W.

The object the writer has had in view in this article has been to draw attention to this affection of babies' eyes, and to enforce the urgent necessity for prompt and proper treatment. He has not inserted any directions as to remedies parents may themselves employ, because it is essentially a disease that no one but a medical man should treat, and parents should

be encouraged to apply at once for relief. For the very poor, in every town is a hospital or dispensary, to which the infant can be taken. The better-to-do should seek the services of their own doctor. Whilst saying this, however, it may be observed that cleanliness is of the greatest importance; and this should be regarded both as to the infant's surroundings and also as to the eyes, in cleansing them with *clean* tepid water frequently, of all discharge; and this requires to be done very gently. At the time of the birth of the baby, also, the eyes are the first parts that should be washed clean, and not left until the last, as is not unfrequently the case. If this were done, the disease in many cases would be prevented.

#### PARLIAMENTARY TITBITS.

EDMUND BURKE, the distinguished orator and writer, at the close of an election in 1774, in an eloquent speech, thanked his constituents for electing him as their member. He was followed by his colleague, Mr Cruger, a merchant, who, after the orator's remarks, contented himself by exclaiming: 'Gentlemen, I say ditto to Mr Burke!'

Two stories are told of Lord Brougham. On being offered the post of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Brougham refused it, alleging that its acceptance would prevent the continuance of his parliamentary duties. 'True,' rejoined Canning; 'but you will be only one stage from the woollack.'—'Yes,' said Brougham; 'but the horses will be off.'

The second is contained in a remark of Sydney Smith, who, seeing Brougham in a carriage on the panel of which was the letter B. surmounted by a coronet, observed: 'There goes a carriage with a B outside and a wasp inside.'

Lord Erskine had the following unique form of replying to begging letters: 'SIR—I feel honoured by your application, and I beg to subscribe'—here the recipient had to turn over the leaf—'myself, your very obedient servant.'

Lord Palmerston's good-humour as a distinct element of his character is well known. We find it even during his last illness, when his physician was forced to mention death. 'Die, my dear doctor!' he exclaimed; 'that's the *last* thing I shall do.'

When Shiel had learned by heart, but failed to remember, the exordium of a speech beginning with the word 'Necessity,' which he repeated three times, Sir Robert Peel continued: 'Is not *always* the mother of invention.'

Some good sayings are attributed to George Selwyn, who was called 'the receiver-general of wit and stray jokes,' and was a silent member of parliament for many years. When told that Sir Joshua Reynolds intended to stand for parliament, Selwyn replied: 'Sir Joshua is the ablest man I know on a canvas.'

Horace Walpole, when complaining one day of the existence of the same indecision, irresolution, and want of system, in the reign of George III. as had been witnessed in that of Queen Anne, remarked concerning the continuance of the Duke of Newcastle as First Lord of the Treasury after the accession of George III.: 'There is nothing new under the sun.'—

'Nor under the grandson,' added Selwyn, George III. being the grandson of George II.

George III. one day alluded to Selwyn as 'that rascal George;' on which Selwyn asked: 'What does that mean?' Immediately adding: 'Oh, I forgot; it is one of the hereditary titles of the Georges.'

The Duke of Cumberland on asking Selwyn how a horse he had lately purchased answered, received the reply: 'I really don't know; I have never asked him a question.'

When it was proposed at one time to tax coals instead of iron, Sheridan objected to the proposal on the ground that 'it would be a jump from the frying-pan into the fire.'

Many other examples might be given of Sheridan's wit; we shall mention three. On meeting one day two royal dukes, one of them said that they had just been discussing whether Sheridan were a greater fool than knave. The wit, placing himself between them, quickly replied: 'Why, faith, I believe I'm between the two.' His son said that were he in parliament, he would write on his forehead, 'To let.'—'Add "unfurnished,"' suggested the father. On another occasion, when asked by his tailor for at least the interest of his bill, Sheridan replied: 'It is not my interest to pay the principal, nor my principle to pay the interest.'

With this last we may compare Talleyrand's method in dealing with creditors. When asked by one when he should receive payment, the only answer given was: '*Ma foi*, how inquisitive you are!'

We shall draw this paper to a close by quoting from *The Anecdotal History of Parliament* the following:

'*An Irish Election Bill.*—The following bill was sent by an innkeeper at Trim to Sir Mark Somerville, who had given an order that all persons who voted for him in a contested election for Meath should be boarded and lodged at his expense. The bill, it is said, is still kept in a frame at the family seat.

April 16, 1826.

#### MY BILL—

To eating 16 freeholders above-stairs for Sir Marks, at 3s. 3d. a head, is to me £2, 12s.

To eating 16 more below-stairs, and 2 priests after supper, is to me, £2, 15s. 9d.

To 6 beds in one room, and 4 in a nother at 2 guineas every bed, and not more than four in any bed, at any time cheap enough, God knows, is to me, £22, 15s.

To 18 horses and 5 mules about my yard all night at 13s. every one of them, and for a man which was lost on the head of watching them all night, is to me, £5, 5s.

For breakfast on tay in the morning for every one of them and as many more as they brought, as near as I can guess, £4, 12s.

To raw whisky and punch, without talking of pipes, tobacco, as well as for porter, and as well as for breaking a pot above-stairs and other glasses and delf for the first day and night, I am not sure, but for the three days and a half of the election as little as I can call it, and to be very exact, it is all or thereabouts as near as I can guess, and not to be too particular, is to me at least, £79, 15s. 9d.

For shaving and cropping off the heads of

the 49 freeholders for Sir Marks, at 13d. for every head of them by my brother had a wote, is to me, £2, 13s. 1d. For a womit and a nurse for poor Tom Kernan in the middle of the night, when he was not expected, is to me ten hogs.

I don't talk of the piper, or for keeping him sober as long as he was sober, is to me, £0.

THE TOTAL.

2 12 0 0

2 15 0 9

22 15 0 0

5 5 0 0

4 12 0 0

79 15 0 9

2 13 0 1

10 10

0 0

£110, 18s. 7d., you may say £111, 0s. 0d. So your Honour, Sir Marks, send me this eleven hundred by Bryan himself, who and I prays for your success always in Trim, and no more at present.'

BREAD FROM THE BARK OF THE  
FIR-TREE.

THE present century is marked by a great social improvement in the position of the lower or working classes; the days of famine, from which they suffered so severely, have passed away, and they can now rely upon bread made wholly from corn, free from husk and chaff, and of that fine quality which a century ago was a luxury only indulged in by the upper or wealthier classes. This improvement has been brought about by a fuller cultivation of the land and by a general development of trade—great social changes which are the spirit or essence of civilisation.

In England, the white bread of the poor man is a thing of this century; whole-meal or brown-bread, barley-bread, and oatcake being their old form of food.

In the last century, when the wood-trade of the Baltic was confined to the Russian ports, the now thriving towns in the Gulf of Bothnia were poor fishing-villages, and the bread of the people was commonly made from the inner bark of the fir-tree. Their staple grain was oats and rye; but in time of scarcity, bark-bread was used; at other times, bark-meal was mixed with corn-meal, as a matter of economy. As the making of bark-bread may now be termed a lost art, we propose to give a few notes upon it, which cannot fail to be of interest to the general reader.

Until recently, the making of bark-bread from the fir-tree was common in the north of Sweden and Norway and in the north-western parts of Finland. The bark was stripped from the trees in the spring, the only time of the year it is easily removable; that of the trunk of large trees was most preferred, as it was less strong than the bark of small trees or branches. Linnaeus, the great naturalist, when passing through the woods of Helsingland, in Sweden, in 1732, says: 'The common and spruce firs grow here to a very large size. The inhabitants had stripped almost every tree of its bark.' The outer or hard scaly bark was carefully removed, as the inner bark was the only part required. The bark was then dried in the sun, and stored

for winter use, a season that embraces six or seven months of the year. Preparatory to grinding, the bark was rendered friable, thick, and porous by being warmed over a slow fire. It was then in part given to their swine in a granulated form, by way of economising corn, the swine by this food being rendered extremely fat. Other parts were cut up obliquely and given to their cows, goats, and sheep. When ground, this bark-meal, as it was called, was stored in barrels.

The following is an old recipe for making it into bread: 'The meal is moistened with cold water into a paste or dough, without being allowed to go into a state of fermentation, and without any yeast. Cold water is preferred to warm, the latter rendering the dough too brittle. The dough being of a soft consistence, is then well kneaded on a table. A handful is sufficient to make one cake, though no person would suppose that so small a quantity could make so large a cake as afterwards appears. This lump of dough is spread out on a flat table, not with a rolling-pin, but with the hands, and a flat trowel or shovel; a considerable quantity of flour is sprinkled over the surface, and the whole mass is extended until it becomes as thin as a skin of parchment. It is then turned by means of a very large shovel, after being previously pricked all over with an instrument made on purpose, and composed of a large handful of the wing feathers of ptarmigan, partridge, or some such birds. The other side, when turned uppermost, is subsequently pricked in the same manner. The cake is then put into the oven, only one being ever baked at a time. The attendance of a person is necessary to watch the cake, and move or lift it up occasionally, that it may not burn. Much time, indeed, is not required for the baking. When sufficiently done, the cake is hung over some kind of rail, and the two sides hang down parallel to each other. Other cakes when baked are hung near to, or over, the first. When the whole are finished, they are laid by one upon another in a large heap, until wanted.'

The dough was said to be more compact than barley, and almost as much so as rye; but the bread was noted as being rather bitter in taste.

Mr Laing, in his *Journal of a Residence in Norway*, states that he had been disposed to doubt the use of fir-bark for bread; but he found it more extensive than is generally supposed. In Norway, it is the custom to kiln-dry oats to such a degree that both the grain and the husks are made into a meal almost as fine as wheaten flour. In bad seasons, the inner bark of young Scotch pines is kiln-dried in a similar manner to the oats, and ground along with them, so as to add to the quantity of the meal. The present dilapidated state of the forests in districts which formerly supplied wood for exportation, is ascribed to the great destruction of young trees for this purpose in the year 1812. The bread baked of the oat and pine meal is said to be very good. It is made in the form of 'flat cakes, covering the bottom of a girdle or frying-pan, and as thin as a sheet of paper, being put on the girdle in nearly a fluid state.' When used at table, these cakes are made crisp by being warmed a little.

It would appear that the inner bark of the silver birch-tree is also used for grinding into bark-meal. Loudon says in his *Arboretum Britannicum*: 'In Kamtschatka, the inner bark of the birch is dried and ground, like that of the Scotch pine, in order to mix it with oatmeal, in times of scarcity. It is also said to be eaten in small pieces along with the roe of fish.' The Rev. Dr Brewer, in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, says: 'In the fifteenth century, Christopher III. of Scandinavia, in a time of great scarcity, had the bark of birchwood mixed with meal for food, from which circumstance he was called "The King of Bark."'

It is quite clear that the birch is wholesome, for in the Baltic Provinces it is customary for women in the streets to sell birch-sap in pails to the cry of *birk vatten* (birch-water); and we are told in the *Penny Cyclopædia* that 'during the siege of Hamburg by the Russians in 1814, almost all the birch-trees in the neighbourhood were destroyed by the Boshkirs and other barbarian soldiers in the Russian service, by being tapped for their sap.'

In the old home of bark-bread, wheat and oats are practically unknown, the shortness of the summer not admitting of the ripening of these cereals. The inhabitants are consequently confined to barley and rye, the latter being their staple food. This rye-bread is dark in colour, but very sweet and wholesome.

We have seen the bakers of Sweden drawing batches of rye-bread; and from the sweetness of it and its appearance as it lined the floor of the bakehouse, we could scarcely disabuse our minds that it was not a batch of English plum-loaf.

The making of bark-bread may now be said to be a thing of the past; but its use even so late as the first half of this century, points to a primitive age, and an intensity in the struggle for life with which we in England are wholly unacquainted.

#### THE STANHOPE GOLD MEDAL.

In this *Journal* for June 6, 1885, we gave our readers some account of the 'Heroes of Peace' whose gallant acts had been rewarded in the course of the previous year by the Royal Humane Society. The Stanhope Gold Medal—the "blue ribbon" of the Society—is awarded early in each year to the hero of the most praiseworthy instance of bravery brought to the notice of the Society during the preceding twelve months. In the beginning of this year, then, the Stanhope Medal was awarded to Alfred Collins, a young fisherman of Looe, Cornwall, for an act of bravery of such signal daring as to deserve special notice here. On a dark stormy night of December 1884, a boy named Hoskings fell overboard from the fishing lugger *Water Nymph*, then seven or eight miles south-east of the Eddystone lighthouse. The captain of the boat, Alfred Collins, immediately jumped overboard, hampered though he was by his oilskins and sea-boots, and holding on to his boat with one hand, endeavoured to clutch the boy with the other. He failed in this attempt; but clambering into the boat again, he secured the end of a line, and carrying this with him, he jumped overboard once more, and swam

in the direction of the sinking lad. There was a heavy gale blowing, and the night was dark, with heavy rain. By the time Collins reached the boy, he was eighty feet from the *Water Nymph*, and already three feet under water; but Collins managed to clutch him, and the two were with great difficulty pulled on board. Such self-sacrificing heroism as this needs no commendation; but the Royal Humane Society do well to recognise it by the award of their medals. In addition to the Stanhope Medal, the Society awarded during last year fifteen silver medals, and one hundred and thirty-nine bronze ones; and to ten heroes who already wore the medal for previous acts of bravery, the clasp was given; while the minor awards, of testimonials on vellum and parchment and of money, numbered no fewer than two hundred and twenty-seven. In the cases reported to the Society during the twelve months, out of four hundred and thirty-nine persons attempted to be rescued, four hundred and six were actually saved.

#### AT THE MILL.

SWALLOWS, skimming o'er the shallows,  
Where, above the reeds and mallows,  
May-flies hover light,  
As ye course o'er flood and lea,  
Twitter of my love to me—  
Cometh he to-night?

Insect-mazes, softly droning  
O'er the mill-stream's fitful moaning,  
In your wayward flight,  
Murmur o'er the bridge's cope  
Lullabies to dreaming Hope—  
Cometh he to-night?

Weave your flaming splendours o'er me,  
Evening clouds that float before me,  
Rosy, gold, and white;  
Flood my soul with pearly rays,  
Harbingers of halcyon days—  
Cometh he to-night?

Flowers that lade the zephyr's fleetness  
With the burden of your sweetness,  
Cheer me, calm and bright,  
Sweet as you my thoughts shall spring,  
When his soft-tongued whispering  
Breathes o'er me to-night.

Fickle he as swallow's glancing;  
Wavering as the May-fly's dancing  
In the waning light!  
Flimsy as the clouds above,  
Frail as petals all his love!  
Where is he to-night?

He is here! my homebound swallow;  
True to me as May-flies follow  
Streamlets to alight.  
Fair as skies in sunset hours,  
Sweeter far than honeyed flowers,  
Comes my love to-night!

F. H. WOOD.

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